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COMMUNITY SERVICE NEWSLETTER is published six times a year by Community Service, Inc. Our purpose is to promote the small community as a basic social institution involving organic units of economic, social and spiritual development.

The Information Superhighway: A Drive to Consume

by Franklin Saige, Associate Editor of *Plain*

This article appeared in the spring issue of Plain, and is condensed with permission.

A few days ago I was shopping inside a retail warehouse the size of an airplane hangar. This one was devoted to graphic supplies, and I was trying to track down some special printer's ink. After a bit of looking and not finding, and several visits to the computer terminal to check inventory, the salesperson indicated we would need to consult with someone in the front office. I was led through a door and into a series of hallways leading to a vast, low-ceilinged room crowded with partitioned cubicles. The air in this place virtually hummed with electricity from the bright lights. I smelled ozone and off-gassing polymer resin. Glancing about I saw that almost every object, every hard surface and textile in sight, was made from plastic. My guide and I were looking for 'Debbie.' As we searched, he stood on tiptoe and peeked over the wall of every cubicle, whispering "Debbie?, Debbie?"

We never found Debbie, although we did manage to greet many of her colleagues at work in their boxes. They generally seemed not unhappy to be there, as they pulled themselves away from their computer screens to greet us. Pale, perhaps, and slightly lethargic, but seemingly content. And, of course, there was the novelty of meeting me, a plain person dressed in clothing more common to the eighteenth century than the twentieth. That probably doesn't happen every day in their office. I know that being in such a place isn't an everyday occurrence for me.

The combination of all those people and computers confined in that room reminded me of a prominent bit of poetry I keep seeing in newspapers and magazines. I suppose it is being recited on television as well. The title is 'What is Newton?' and [one] verse goes, "Newton will help you get organized./Newton can help you make phone calls./Newton can help manage your schedule./Newton can help you plan your day./Newton is always looking for ways to help you out." The final couplet: "Newton is here today./Newton will be everywhere tomorrow."

We are living in a time when the delivery of advertising poetry is instantaneous, and ubiquitous. Newton, as you surely know, is a messagepad computer, and the poem is an ad. I like Newton's poem in particular because it so brashly proclaims to the millions who work in situations such as the graphic supply warehouse that a more advanced computer is going to make their work *even easier* and their lives *even better*.

Surely this must be a winning strategy, or it wouldn't be so frequently used. And yet, anyone who steps back even slightly from the promise of momentary gain can see that work and life have speeded up and become more difficult and less enjoyable--or at least less experiential--since computer and video technology have come of age....

Along with Newton's ode to a new machine, the first mercantile rejoicings over the coming "information superhighway" have arrived, and they, too, invoke art to sell change. A televised ad for MCI reportedly features a child-star chanting, "There Will Be A Road. It Will Not Connect Two Points. It Will Connect All Points. It Will Not Go From Here To There. There Will Be No There. We Will All Only Be Here." Maybe this is actually a profound utterance, rather than the baloney it appears to be, if we listen more carefully. Because even though the rumble of the bulldozers clearing the way for the information superhighway is fairly distant, perhaps it's time to listen, and then ask just where exactly is this "Here" where We Will All Be?

The explicit goal of the electronics revolution is to turn machines into people. People of a lowly station who will do our bidding, to be sure, but intelligent and understanding servants who nevertheless behave in a civilized manner. But it is obvious to those who choose to remain outside this revolution that personal computers, networks, video entertainment and television--in short, all the technological component now coalescing into the information

superhighway--are turning people into machines. If that seems too strong, allow me to go even further and say that perhaps we are *actually being put inside the machine*. Maybe that's where the "Here" is, inside a world run by the laws of Newton.

Computers began to invade work and leisure at the point their hitherto mysterious operation could be presented as a metaphor for something the user already understood. The Apple computer company is credited with popularizing the "desktop" metaphor and a what-you-see-is-what-you-get videoscreen representation which makes it easy to use computers to organize and carry out work. The selling of this technology originally took the form of promising that the personal computer would revolutionize work by decentralizing it. And that we would become a "paperless" society to boot. The advertising campaign used to introduce the Apple Macintosh had the theme of lone rebellion-toppling The System.

I have noticed that left-wing activists and environmentalists have taken this message to heart and joined the multimedia revolution with a vengeance. Apparently, for them, decentralization and mobilization are attractive technological promises.

Walking through the warren of cubicles at the graphic supply warehouse, I realized once again that we haven't mastered the computer's metaphor of friendly desktop liberator. Instead, the metaphor has made it possible for us to be drawn by stages into the machine's reality. A better metaphor might be the fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel. Like the two lost children, we happily approach the gingerbread house, only to find that inside lies a prison.

Outside the prison is "reality," which is not a metaphor for anything. Reality, for we who are not yet Here in the world of the information superhighway, consists of life. Despite the god-like pretensions of our culture, we are still connected to the whole of life--complex, chan-

ging, open ended, yet intimately connected, a cyclic, coming-to-be and passing away. Furthermore, this life is not controlled by us or our ideas, wishes, or commands. Those who live in the Mississippi flood plain or on the San Andreas fault already know this.

Knowledge has not stopped some from trying to wrest control of the creation from the Creator. The discovery in the last century of oil and its use as energy resource and material feedstock has, however temporarily, convinced our society that we have the power to depart from the natural cycle and bulldoze a path to total control of ourselves and the environment. To fully conquer our natural dependence on the real world, this path must now become a broad road, a superhighway leading humanity to the place where Everywhere is Here.

One of the perils of modern technology is that it is invented to be sold, as opposed to most earlier inventions, which were made to be used by the community, the inventor himself, or his patron. Modern technology comes clothed in seductive imagery in order to make the sale, but it can take away our freedom once we buy into it. It takes away our freedom by reducing our ability to choose—for example our ability to choose not to think in terms of "organization" or having our schedules "managed." It takes away our freedom by narrowing our options to a set of preprogrammed choices. Its screen-based nature removes the sensory complexity that is the most obvious characteristic of the lived world. We are discovering that sitting in front of a screen all day is hardly the same thing as overthrowing Big Brother.

Of course, there is another school of thought on this question, with most people believing that technology barely influences how we live our lives. "It's what we *do* with technology that counts," they say. In other words, it all strictly depends upon our moral fitness, our will to master the machine.

I suppose even the most seductive forms of technology can be resisted, at least for a while. For example, people resisted using automobiles at first. Many people thought the automobile would be too noisy, too fast, too pretentious, and just plain too expensive to fit the existing social fabric. Initially, most people did not buy one. However, even though their fears about the automobile (and worse) were quickly realized, soon everyone who could afford to own one, did. Then these automobiles were used in ways that gradually led to the weakening of the family and the community, and the destruction of the landscape.

If hundreds of millions of car owners could ostensibly choose how they would use this technology, what happened to make them choose destructive rather than supportive uses? Did they simply change their values on a whim? Or could something inherent in the technology have pulled them in a particular direction?

What does the automobile do *best*: pull families apart, cause urban sprawl, distort our sense of distance, or make travel more convenient? Only the last --convenience-- is proven false every morning at rush hour, yet the car was sold to us on metaphors of speed and convenience. If we want to know where the information superhighway is leading us, maybe we should ask ourselves what *it* will do *best*.

To follow this road, we need to know that the term "information superhighway" is, like Newton's poem, strictly the creation of the advertising muse. It was coined to piggyback onto the prestige of the "information highway" of interactive (meaning two-way) networked computers sharing text and data known as the Internet. What makes the superhighway super is that it will be a commercially run interactive video network put together by the mega telecommunication and cable television industries. "Interactive Pay-TV" would be a more accurate name for it, though the Internet and similar data networks will undoubtedly be incorporated and offered as incidental services. A true

definition of the information superhighway would focus on its somewhat less lofty pursuits: video shopping, pay-per-view movies on demand (presently a 10-billion-dollar annual market for video rental stores) and two-way videophones.

Once the billions of dollars to build the system have been spent, "Everywhere Will Be Here." More precisely, every marketer will be Here--in the living room and inside heads, because entertainment viewing choices, and especially video shopping buying preferences, will be monitored and analyzed, so that advertisers can turn around and market to you in a very targeted manner. Imagine one day using your television to purchase cloth diapers from the Virtual Wal-Mart. Right after that, you switch to an entertainment program and *voila!* the commercials are all for Pampers, piped to your specific household as a result of your latest purchasing profile. That is the commercial dream, very interactive in its own way, though not exactly in the poetic way it is being portrayed. And it could even be worse than I have painted it, because personal communication (videophones, Email) and all other text and data entering the superhighway would in theory be available for "analysis" to the same end.

Whatever the specific route the superhighway takes, it is obviously going to be *best* at invading your private life. Ultimately, its *best* use will be in driving up consumption, something that appeals to marketers more than me, concerned as I am about the condition of the planet and my soul. I don't know about you, but I need less temptation to buy things, not more. And I don't want to be constantly sold to.

The important books written in this decade include Jerry Mander's *In the Absence of the Sacred*. And in that book, I think the most useful page is the one listing "Ten Recommended Attitudes About Technology." Along with number one ("Since most of what we are told about new technology comes from its

proponents, be deeply skeptical of all claims") and number two ("Assume all technology guilty until proven innocent") my favorite is number five: "Never judge a technology by the way it benefits you personally. Seek a holistic view of its impacts. The operative question is not if it benefits you, but who benefits most? And to what end?"

I try to keep these criteria in mind when someone suggests because some particular need of theirs is being met by a computer or television or interactive network, these technologies can be used "for good, too. It just depends on what we do with them." Since people appear to be more enslaved in their work and home lives than ever before, we could ask whether the problems their computers and electronic media seem to alleviate can be traced to the advent of computers themselves? Have computers and television speeded up economic life, and undermined the social fabric?

None of these technologies would be here if not for their much greater utility as pillars of the consuming society. An ambulance is a "good" use for an internal combustion engine. It can take people from a car wreck to the hospital in minutes. But it takes a whole society of energy guzzling car buyers addicted to mobility and speed to provide the marketing momentum for automobiles, including ambulances, to be produced.

We are presently being assured that stepping into the virtual reality of the information superhighway and opening our minds to it is a good thing. Doubtless there will be many examples of this good: Grandparents will be able to see the grandkids on the videophone. The disabled will have more opportunities for inclusion.

And we will hear more and more about "virtual communities"--an exciting concept because, after all, the real ones have nearly disappeared. Perhaps almost real ones will suffice, but I am unwilling to be part of a technology which can only exist if it drives me to consume

more, which drains my will to seek out real community.

A woman at an organic farming conference I attended last winter told the program speaker, who was against most new technologies, that even though she, too, thought these technologies might be harmful to the social fabric, still she felt she had to keep up with them. "Since this is what's going on in the world, don't we have to participate, just to survive?" No one could answer her then, and I have only part of the answer myself. I can only say I'm unwilling to drive the superhighway into the land of Here, and I sense that many others are at the point of having to decide whether to continue on this ride or find an exit. On the other hand, the people I glimpse in their cubicles, or sitting around their TV hearths at home, don't seem too dissatisfied. What will wake them up? How can I help them reverse direction and get back out of the machine?

I have no interest in being part of a "movement" to "ban" or "boycott." To do that, I would have to become like my friends in the ecology movement, *connected* to computer networks in order to *exchange information* and get *organized*. I see the technology encouraging in them precisely the way of relating to lived experience that has brought about the crises they seek to alleviate.

My strategy for exiting the information superhighway is simply never to enter it. The only "direct action" I can take is to live a real life, in real time, without viewing or networking or over-consuming anything. No input, no output. And I am going to tell anyone that will listen that the Here of real life, in real community, in real reality, is better than the virtual Here of the information superhighway any day of the week. That real and virtual are in fact speeding along in entirely opposite directions.



Building Community with Affordable Housing

Report on Community Service Conference
1994

by Walt Tulecke

Our conference this year attracted a wide interest group of more than 60 people who joined together in community-like spirit to share food, experiences and ideas about ways to achieve affordable housing through cooperative effort. We also created our own community for the time we were together. We were helped and encouraged in our small group discussions by several resource people and all those who attended.

Ken Norwood, architect and planner from the Shared Living Resource Center in Berkeley, California, gave the keynote talk Friday evening on housing for ecological living. Ken used material from his and Kathleen Smith's forthcoming book, "Rebuilding Community in America," to set the stage for other small group discussions. He described examples of small acreage communities which were designed for shared social and recreational space with dining facilities for some meals, in addition to private living space for families or other members. Ken showed century-old examples from various cultures around the world as well as more modern ones, some of which he helped design and build. He admitted that it is difficult to get people to take down their fences and retrofit their area for a common space for resource sharing, recreation and social interaction. But it is being done.

So how does one start on a new path to affordable housing and shared community space? Start with food! Have potlucks, some fun and games, and share responsibility as a way to build trust. Share possessions like lawnmowers, belong to a shared car club, think of equity instead of sole ownership, as well as security and helping one another.

The New Leaf Co-housing group from Cincinnati, Ohio, described how they are going about forming a community on the land by sharing time at potluck meals, social events, land-search weekends and work projects. Their small group workshop focused on how to effectively make decisions by consensus. We role-played a meeting of a community faced with these questions: What is our purpose? What does affordable mean? and Who can be a member? A group-appointed facilitator guided us toward consensus decisions by making sure that everyone was included in the discussions and that feelings as well as thoughts were shared. The New Leaf people demonstrated the friendly and useful way in which they use color-coded cards to conduct their meetings. ("Colored Cards Improve Group Process". by Jennifer Madden. Cohousing. Fall. 1991).

The cards are used during discussions to make an observation or get the floor (red), indicate support (green), raise a question (yellow), give an opinion or comment (blue) or go along with the group (orange). The cards save time by allowing more participation as discussion or decision making takes place.

The discussion group on strawbale houses was led by Richard Cartwright and Mary Meyer. They are building such a house at the Michaela Farm of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, Indiana. A video of their house and another, "The Elegant Solution: Straw Bale Construction", gave details of the foundation, waterproofing, roof overhang, the best straw and other details. The use of straw is ecologically sound as an insulating material and it

saves on fuel costs over the years, once it is covered with stucco inside and out to keep out moisture and bugs.

The panel discussion on affordable housing emphasized some of the practical steps needed to address this problem. Roger Lurie, Miami Township Trustee, suggested the planned unit development as a way to get maximum flexibility in the design and building of new housing. He also suggested that some Village of Yellow Springs land might be available for affordable housing units. Another panel member, Don Hollister, Yellow Springs Village Council member, asked that we examine our assumptions and expectations about who the housing is for and how the costs might be met and kept within reach as "affordable housing". Other discussion was around the possibility of a land trust as a way to reduce speculation in land value, the need to educate building inspectors and, above all, the need to have a workable, coherent, long-term plan and some financial resources.

Several times during the conference we had a sharing circle of all participants so that everyone could contribute or comment. In this sense we used our conference community and resources well. In our final sharing circle on Sunday morning Ken Norwood commented that any effort to get affordable housing would have to have people understand the "power of sharing responsibility". Sharing responsibility can make affordable housing happen.

Once again we were fortunate to have the singing, square dancing and banana ice cream making led by Victor Eyth. These activities were enjoyed and much appreciated. We had a good time together and I think that each of us took some hope and encouragement from the conference back to our daily lives. Hope to see you next year.

Editor's Note: In our next issue we will include a report on Ken Norwood's keynote speech by Elizabeth Lotspeich.

Announcements About Community Service Newsletter

We want to let our members know that we are planning on making our Community Service Newsletter a quarterly publication instead of bimonthly, as it has been for years. With this change, starting in 1995, each issue will be 16 pages instead of 12. We expect this to save us some mounting postage costs, and at the same time not infringe on our space to bring our readers helpful articles on building community.

We were pleased that over 45 people registered to attend the conference full time and more than 30 part-time. We are sorry there were a few whose addresses we did not get. Overall, it means more than 80 people attended some part of the gathering on affordable housing.

We are sending this issue, with Walter Tullecke's conference report, to all who attended our conference, even part time, if they left us their address. We hope those of you who came to our conference and who are not yet members, will care to receive our Newsletter regularly four times a year and to support our work through an annual tax-deductible contribution of \$25.



Visit to Mitraniketan, Kerala, India August 17-23, 1994

by Lee Morgan

K. Viswanathan, Director of Mitraniketan, "Abode of Friends", had spent several months in Yellow Springs living with Arthur and Lucy Morgan and working in an orchard near here in the fifties. Viswan, as he is affectionately called by those who know him, inspired by Arthur and Lucy Morgan, went back to his home village to establish and develop his educational and community ideas of integrated work, study, health and agriculture. Mitraniketan has been the result.

Lee Morgan, Arthur Morgan's grandson, spent 2 years at Mitraniketan in 1966-67 and his wife-to-be, Vicki, spent 15 months there before they were married. In 1987 Lee went back for a visit. The following report is of Lee and Vicki's most recent visit with their children, Asha and Matthew.

Asha, Matthew, Vicki and I arrived at Trivandrum airport on Wednesday morning, August 17th. We were met by Viswan and his daughter Asha. They had two vehicles to carry all our luggage, a small sedan and a jeep. We paused at the Mitraniketan city center and then proceeded to Mitraniketan.

Kerala is still beautiful and though the population has grown, the whole state is greener than 27 years ago when I was there. This was particularly true of Mitraniketan where there are more trees and more variety of growth. Though there are new buildings and more people, there is more vegetation, all planted with a purpose and well maintained. The buildings had running water and electricity, both of which were intermittent as in the rest of India.

Viswanathan has tried many experiments and one can see the results of both the successes and the failures. The purebred bull has improved the quality of local cattle greatly.

Viswan was just introducing rubber trees on my last visit (the early 80's) and now many farmers raise rubber. Successes include the Khadi co-op which is prospering, the handicraft co-op and the increased diversity in crops. Failures were operations which have not been able to become profitable and contribute, like the printing operation where I had worked in the '60's.

The school is back in operation after a 13-year closure from 1978-1992 and is largely populated with children from the tribal areas who are financed by the government. The government financing is not adequate to cover the cost of the school and the income generated by the earning operations is not sufficient to cover the school shortfall.

The financial situation is poor. Teachers have not been paid for six months. Money is owed by the government but it will not be enough to make Mitraniketan current in paying its bills. They will have to come up with some method of raising money to help subsidize the school or drastically scale back the school to a size which can be supported by the income-producing operations, of which the farm seems the most viable.

I estimate that Mitraniketan's current debt for wages and past due bills is in the range of \$40,000. When one considers that this is about 6 months pay for the entire staff, the dollar really goes a long way. The school is critical to the tripartite mission of Mitraniketan, which seems very similar to the mission of Antioch College and the Arthur Morgan School at Celo, NC: work, study and community.

Viswan continues to have a clear focus on his vision of work, study and community in a rural setting. He is still weak on the financial resources to keep pace with the vision, though his wife Sethu and others have managed to balance needs with resources sufficiently over the years to allow for amazing growth and progress toward Viswan's vision.

There are many exciting things happening: silk production is being introduced, from growing the mulberry trees to weaving the silk. A variety of small businesses are being incubated, producing products such as incense, stone carvings, hobby looms, pottery and graft varieties of trees and plants. The health center continues its important service providing nurse trainees and a doctor to the community in an expanded building which includes space for the elderly.

There was a group of student workcampers from Edinburgh University when we were there. They are building an addition on the kitchen and dining area and each workcamper raised money to contribute to Mitraniketan to cover their room, board, and part of the building cost. However, there are a stream of visitors who take far more than they leave, particularly because Mitraniketan is such a rare opportunity to get "up close and intimate" with South India.

I was very struck by the stability of the mission, the values and by the focus on work, study and community. It is an experiment worth supporting now just as it was years ago. Kerala in general, Travancore and Mitraniketan in particular, are real laboratories of how we can dramatically improve the quality of life with minimal resources. I could see the improvement in literacy and sanitation. That Kerala has achieved dramatic levels of literacy (higher than the U.S. in my opinion), low infant mortality, high life expectancy, greatly reduced birth rate, all with minimal resources (per capita income about \$360 per year), is a lesson for the world.

I had two major concerns: 1) financial stability, Mitraniketan is about \$40,000 in the hole. 2) Succession for Viswan. The two issues are not unrelated. Without financial stability succession planning sounds more like recruiting a captain for the Titanic. However, with an emphasis on reining in new ideas and projects and increased marketing of the already

existing products, the finances have a chance of stabilizing so that a serious plan for succession can be addressed.

Editor's note: We were delighted to have this first-hand report from Lee Morgan. Though Community Service is no longer able to make Mitraniketan part of its primary focus, as it was for Arthur Morgan, we will gladly forward to Mitraniketan any contributions readers care to send to us for this purpose.



Book Review

IS IT UTOPIA YET? AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF TWIN OAKS COMMUNITY IN ITS 26TH YEAR. by Kat Kinkade. Twin Oaks Publishing, Twin Oaks Community, Inc. 1994. 319pp. paperback/\$13.00/ copy (including shipping)

by Virginia Hofmann

Somewhere in the countryside, visitors to Twin Oaks turn into a long road, notice a two acre vegetable garden and then continue on to a grassy square that is surrounded by four unpainted houses. Within the square, casually dressed people are coming and going, some busily weaving rope hammocks. Farther out, there are woods and a few small houses scattered among the trees.

Visitors and readers of "Is it Utopia Yet?" are taken beyond this physical scene, deep into the living human history of Twin Oaks to explore the failures and successes of this 25-year-old intentional community.

Kat Kinkade, the only remaining resident member of the original eight co-founders, tells this story and new resident Jonathan Roth's cartoons add a lively counterpoint.

Twin Oaks was created on 123 acres of forest and farmland with a small house, a few barns, \$2,000 and dreams of creating the community blueprinted in B.F. Skinner's novel "Walden Two". But Skinner's theories of behaviorism on a community scale soon vanished amidst the unpredictable dynamics of close, intense human interrelationships and the realities of physical survival that often had to take precedence over behaviorist theory. What lasted from "Walden Two" was an economically self-sufficient, roughly equalitarian mini-society that is governed by a system composed of committees, individual input, managers and a board of planners.

The Opinions and Ideas (O&I) bulletin board serves as the editorial page, reflecting the pulse beat of the community. This, combined with the multiple daily contacts of members, forms the core of consensus needed to decide community matters. In this system there are no special privilege groups or individual leaders to control the dependents, minimum wage earners, or a middle class to protect the privileged class. Every Twin Oaker works for labor credits and has the opportunity to take responsible roles within the community. No one works outside the community or has income from the outside. There is almost no crime, no violence and no need for a police force. The New Age culture of vegetarianism, feminism, natural fiber clothing, organic food, is more common in Twin Oaks than in other communities.

Kinkade captures the reader's attention throughout, as she traverses the details of a community founded on the ideals of eight people and a few acres of land that has become a thriving, self-sufficient community of 85 adults and 15 children, a community that has

influenced several communities and created two other intentional communities.

Twin Oaks has lasted because people, such as Kinkade, have invested their emotions and energies and made personal sacrifices for the benefit of the community. The Kinkades will always have a unique impact on the core of the community and the quality of many lives. Kinkade's lifelong efforts serve as an outstanding example of what one person can accomplish in the constantly changing mix that *is community*. No viable community can exist without the Kinkades of this world.



Consensus: Making it Work

by Geoph Kozeny

The following is excerpted from the Winter, 1993 issue of the Fellowship for Intentional Communities Newsletter.

Geoph is active in the FIC. Here are some of his suggestions about techniques to facilitate consensus decision-making which appeared in the *Fellowship Newsletter*.

"With 'I' statements, participants need to be sure that feedback and criticism are offered in

a constructive and non-judgmental fashion. Rather than blaming, calling names or trying to prove that the opposition is wrong, all are encouraged to own their feelings and opinions by using such phrases as 'I feel...', 'I believe...', and 'My personal experience has been...'. If individuals state their position in a way that acknowledges the role of their own experiences and perceptions, and if they try to understand the context and experiences of the others participating in the process, the resulting environment of mutual trust and appreciation will often contribute to effective communication and the resolution of sticky issues.

"Techniques of active listening are a good companion to 'I' statements. Learning to restate an opposing point of view is often the key to overcoming an intense situation. If the other person knows they have been heard, they are often willing to cooperate more fully in finding a resolution that also addresses your concerns.

"There is a respectful, graceful way to acknowledge another person's context (or even a lack of information), by sharing that you have had a different experience, or perhaps are familiar with information they haven't become aware of, information that might encourage them to modify their position.

"A very useful metaphor is to encourage all participants to look for the "grain of truth" in each point of view. By acknowledging that collectively we are smarter than any one of us individually, it becomes easier to identify and support points of agreement -- and by identifying the progress we have already made in reaching partial consensus, we can foster a sense of accomplishment and teamwork that gives us the confidence and willingness to work toward the resolution of those few remaining areas where we lack unity.

"Effective committee work is the backbone of efficient process. If it is suspected that a pending topic will yield factions, the best approach

may well be to form a committee whose task is to come up with a proposal that accounts for all known extremes -- and the best way to assure that all concerns are satisfied is to make sure that someone representing each perspective is on the committee."

Geoph Kozeny received his consensus training at Alpha Farm in workshops led by Caroline Estes. For more information contact: Alpha Farm, 503-964-5102 or 503-268-4311, Deadwood, OR 97430.

Readers Write

About the Community Service Conference

Thank you for arranging a splendid program for the fall annual Community Service Conference. I appreciated the hospitality of my host, Kay Hollister, in the overnight stay.

Eleanor Morrison, Cincinnati, Ohio

We enjoyed your Conference immensely and look forward to next year's. We also loved our visit to your community of Yellow Springs and will visit it again in the near future. Thank you.

Suzanne Watson and Slim Bukosky



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Membership is a means of supporting and sharing the work of Community Service. The basic \$25 annual membership contribution includes a subscription to our bimonthly Newsletter and 10% off Community Service-published literature. Larger contributions are always needed, however, and smaller ones will be gladly accepted. Community Service is a nonprofit corporation which depends on contributions and the sale of literature to fund its work so that it can offer its services to those who need them. All contributions are appreciated, needed and tax-deductible. Due to added postage costs, foreign membership, including Canada, is \$30 in U.S. currency.

Have Your Friends Seen The Newsletter?

Please send the names and addresses of your friends who might enjoy receiving a sample Newsletter and booklist. If you wish specific issues sent, please send \$1 per copy.

Editor's Note

We welcome letters to the editor (under 300 words) and articles (700-2000 words) about any notable communities or people who are improving the quality of life in their communities. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish the article returned. The only compensation we can offer is the satisfaction of seeing your words in print and knowing you have helped spread encouraging and/or educational information.

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